

**STATE OF ILLINOIS  
ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION**

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| Illinois Commerce Commission                 | : |           |
| On Its Own Motion                            | : |           |
|  | : | 11-NOI-01 |
| Notice of Inquiry into the Implementation of | : |           |
| Public Act 97-0222                           | : |           |

**COMMENTS OF COMMONWEALTH EDISON COMPANY**

Commonwealth Edison Company (“ComEd”) submits these initial comments in response to the Illinois Commerce Commission (“ICC”) Notice of Inquiry (“NOI”).

**I. Real-Time Pricing and Municipal Aggregation.**

The second “educational item” contained in subsection 16-117(e), as amended by PA 97-0222, is:

(2) the choices available to consumers to take electric service from an alternative retail electric supplier or remain as a retail customer of an electric utility;

ComEd is aware that the Commission’s Office of Retail Market Development (“ORMD”), in its effort to give substance to this provision, has posted a page on its web site ([www.pluginillinois.org/](http://www.pluginillinois.org/)) that generally sets forth the supply offerings available from alternative suppliers and utilities and instructs customers on how to compare the utility’s default, fixed-price supply rates to the fixed-price supply charges of alternative suppliers. While the instruction provided to assist customers on how to compare utility fixed-price supply rates to those offered by alternative suppliers is adequate for that purpose, it fails to provide any guidance on how to properly compare fixed-price supply offerings from either alternative suppliers or utilities to the rates offered under a utility’s residential real-time pricing program. Further, the website fails to directly provide, in the Commission’s own words, a meaningful level of explanation of the State-

mandated real-time pricing programs, and the limited explanation that is provided is not commensurate with the explanation provided for utility fixed-price offerings.

In light of the fact that subsection 16-117(e)(1) requires utilities to provide the Plug In Illinois internet address on all of its bills upon completion of the NOI, the Commission's educational materials should provide more assistance to the over 20,000 real-time pricing customers in the State considering alternative supply options and generally play a more definitive role in directly explaining the State-mandated program to those customers taking fixed-price service. At a minimum, the website should explain that the Price to Compare, which is derived from utility fixed-price supply rates, and the comparisons made thereto should not be used by real-time pricing customers as a surrogate for their average real-time price for shopping purposes.

Similarly, the Plug In Illinois website fails to provide basic information to those customers located in units of local government that have passed municipal aggregation referenda about such programs and their requirements or their rights as existing supply customers of either alternative suppliers or utilities. The current content of the website is limited to a list of units of local government that have passed referenda and, where available, the supply rates obtained through their bidding processes. With municipal aggregations expected by many to be the single largest force driving customers to alternative supply next year, the Commission's educational materials should be used to do more than just identify the units of local government where aggregation is occurring. They should proactively address the questions that might arise and go unanswered by municipal aggregators. For example, customers should be informed that they cannot opt-out, if they so chose, by calling their local utility – which is a situation that ComEd has already experienced.

## **II. Complaints Concerning Switching Authorization.**

The eighth “educational item” contained in subsection 16-117(e), as amended by PA 97-0222, is:

(8) the complaint procedures set forth in Section 10-108 of this Act by which consumers may seek a redress of grievances against an electric utility or an alternative retail electric supplier and a list of phone numbers of the Commission, the Attorney General or other entities that can provide information and assistance to customers;

ComEd requests that the Commission, in its educational materials, specifically indicate that customers who have questions or complaints about the authorization of a supplier switch (or the lack thereof) should first contact the supplier to whom the switch was made. If that does not answer the question or resolve the issue, then the customer should contact the Commission.

ComEd requests that the Commission indicate that the customer should not contact the utility because the utility will not be in a position to answer questions about switching authorization or resolve a complaint. Such information in the Commission’s educational material would help customers avoid calls to the utility which will not resolve their issues and might only increase their frustration.

## **III. Information on the Utility Bill.**

Paragraph 16-117(g)(1), as amended, states the following:

(1) If the electric utility bills residential or small commercial retail customers directly, then the bill shall include the Commission's electric education internet address in the space reserved for alternative retail electric supplier messages.

ComEd would point out that there is a practical problem with the literal wording of the statute. In the case of ComEd, the only bills that have a space reserved for ARES messages are those bills that include charges for receivables which were purchased from ARES pursuant to ComEd’s Rider PORCB. That means, if taken literally, this provision would not apply to any

bill to a ComEd bundled service customer or to a customer of an ARES that did not take service from ComEd under Rider PORCB.

ComEd proposes to fulfill the spirit of this requirement by including the Commission's electric education Internet address in a more consistent location on all ComEd bills to residential and small retail customers. ComEd is currently considering that the information would be located in the "graylighted" section of the bill that today contains ComEd contact numbers and the customer's usage history. In addition ComEd is considering that this section of the bill would also hold the information that would be required by Staff's proposed subparagraph 280.50(c)(2)(B) currently being considered in the Commission's rulemaking Docket 06-0703:

B) The toll free telephone number for the Commission's Consumer Services Division, and a statement indicating that the customer must contact the utility first before seeking assistance from the Commission's Consumer Services Division.

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Respectfully Submitted,



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